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— CAROL DENBOW, STAR CLIPPER BOOKS

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01
OF 3
MONTHLY

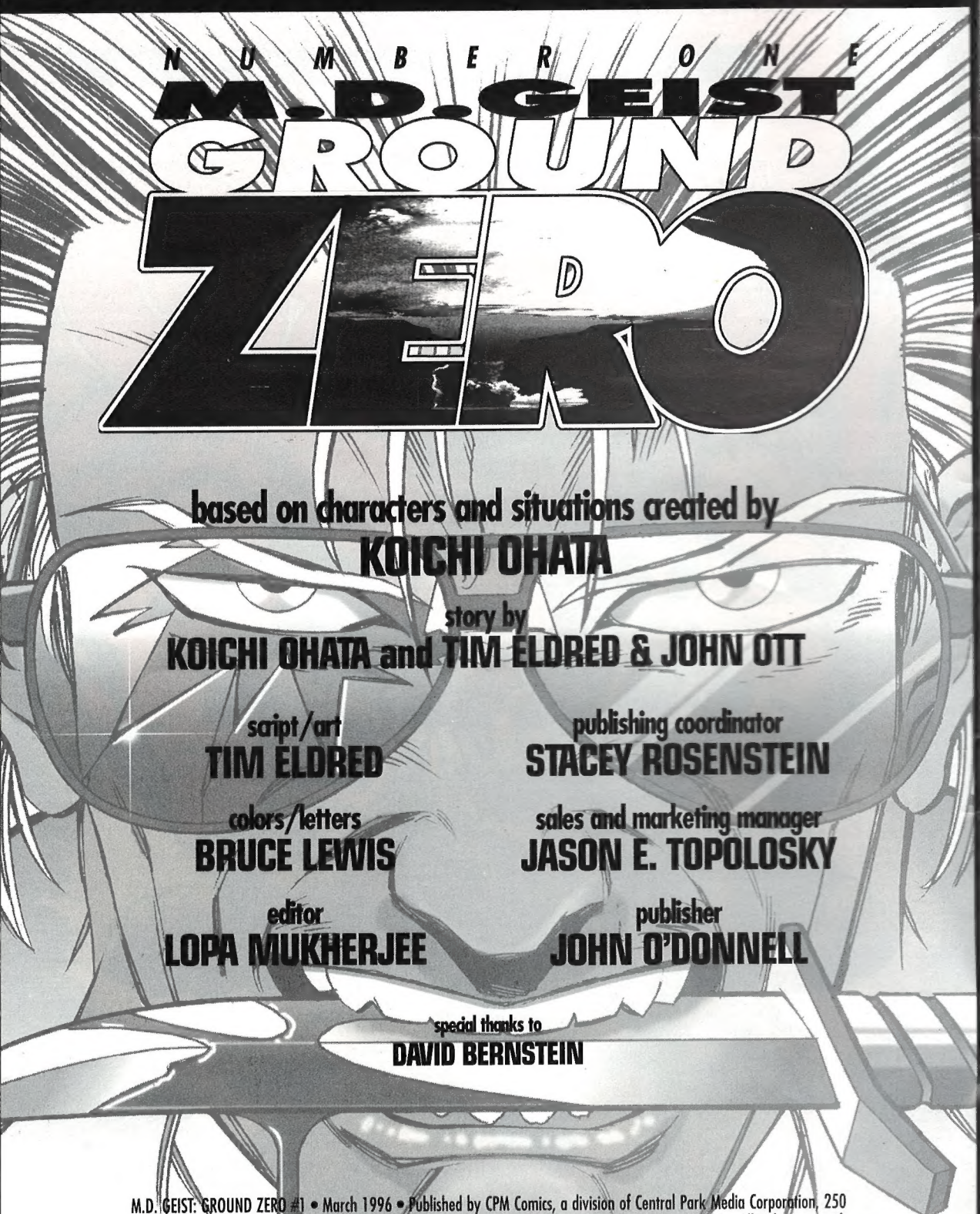
ALL-NEW ORIGINAL PREQUEL TO THE ANIMATED FILM

M.D. GEIST

GROUND ZERO

BONUS!
ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS
PREVIEW INSIDE

"THIS IS THE ONLY TITLE FEATURED THIS MONTH THAT HAS ANY INVESTMENT POTENTIAL."
— TOM LAWTON, NEWBURY COMICS



based on characters and situations created by
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special thanks to
DAVID BERNSTEIN

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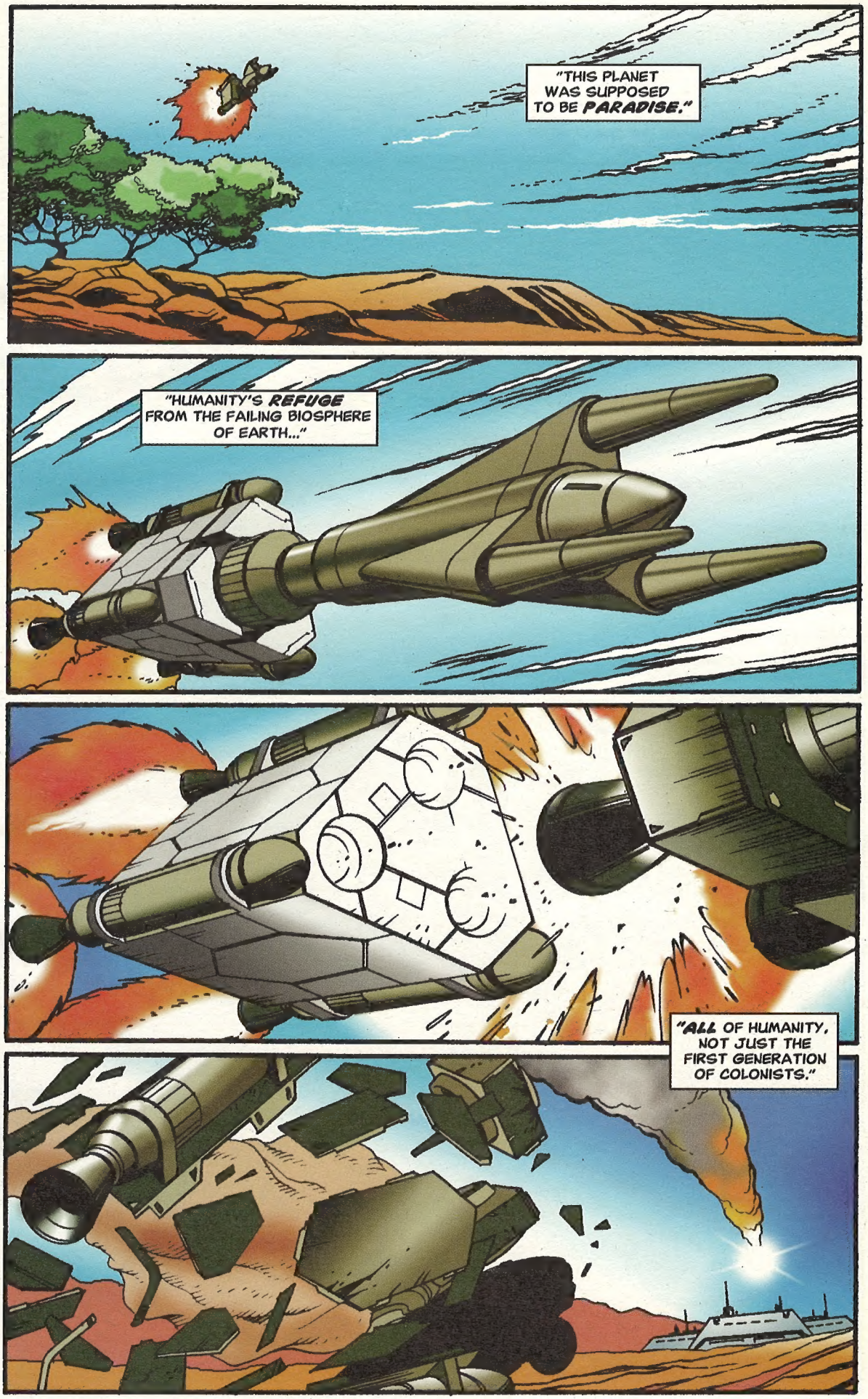
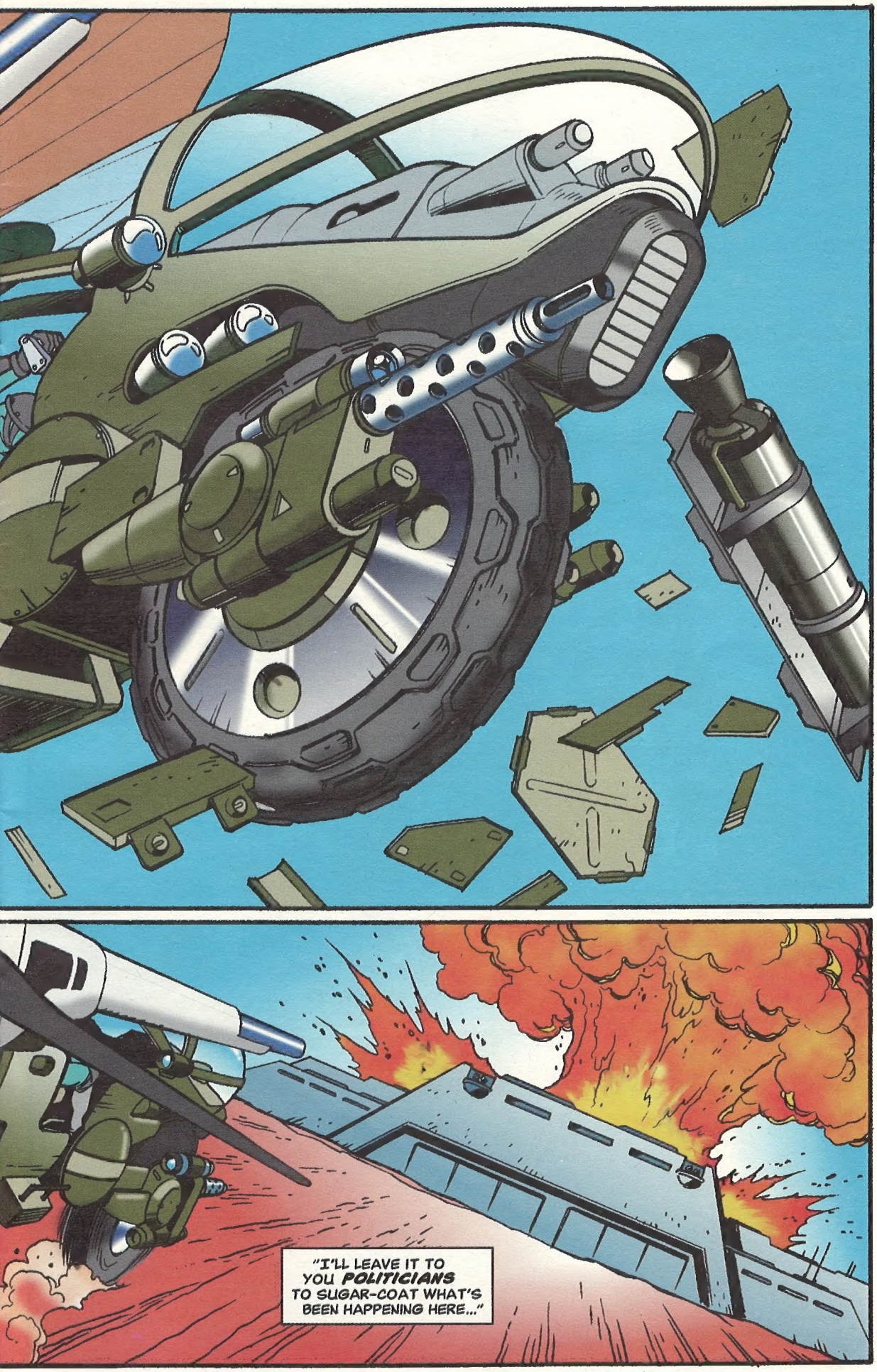
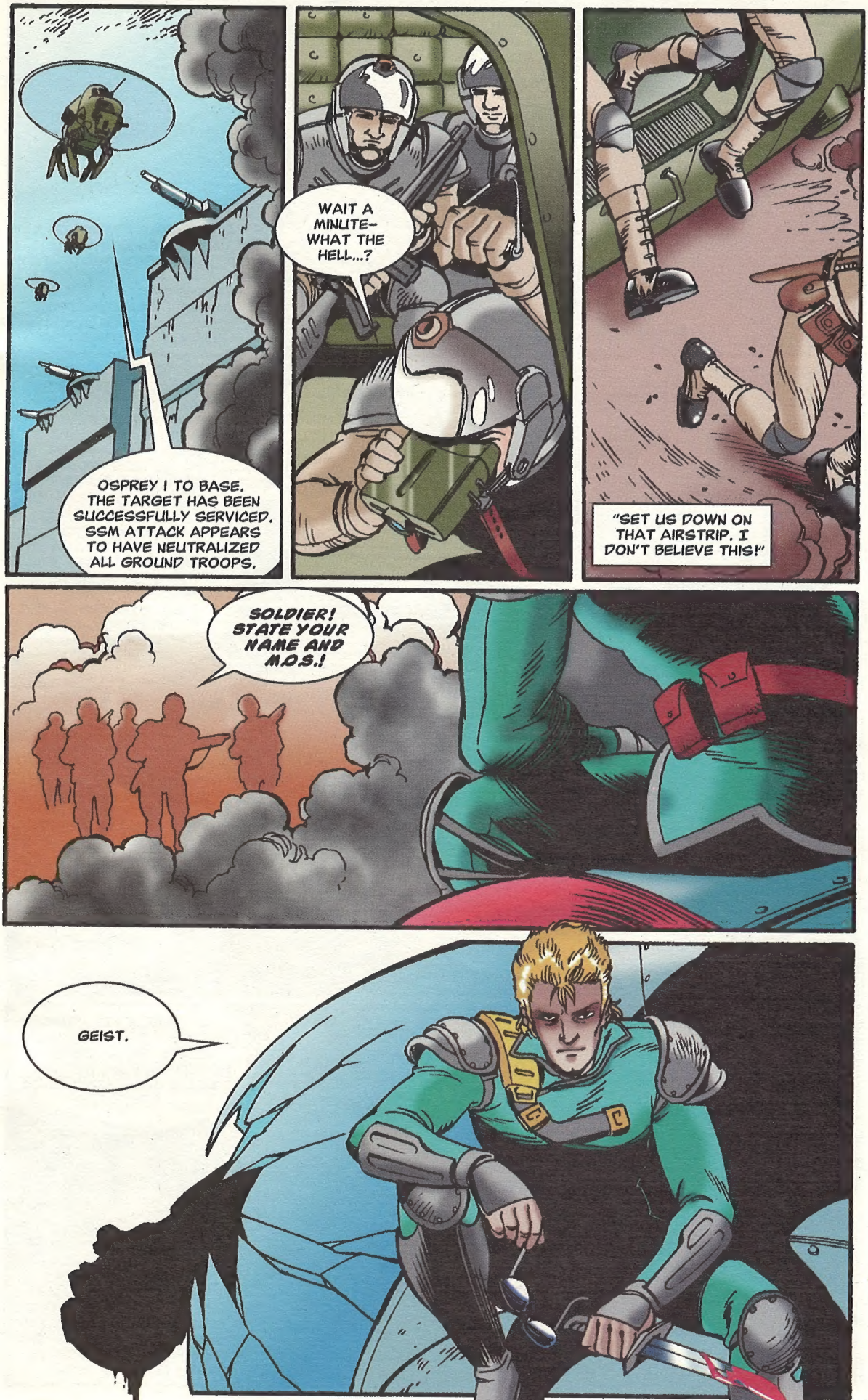

"THIS PLANET WAS SUPPOSED TO BE *PARADISE.*"
"HUMANITY'S *REFUGE* FROM THE FAILING BIOSPHERE OF EARTH..."
"*ALL* OF HUMANITY, NOT JUST THE FIRST GENERATION OF COLONISTS."

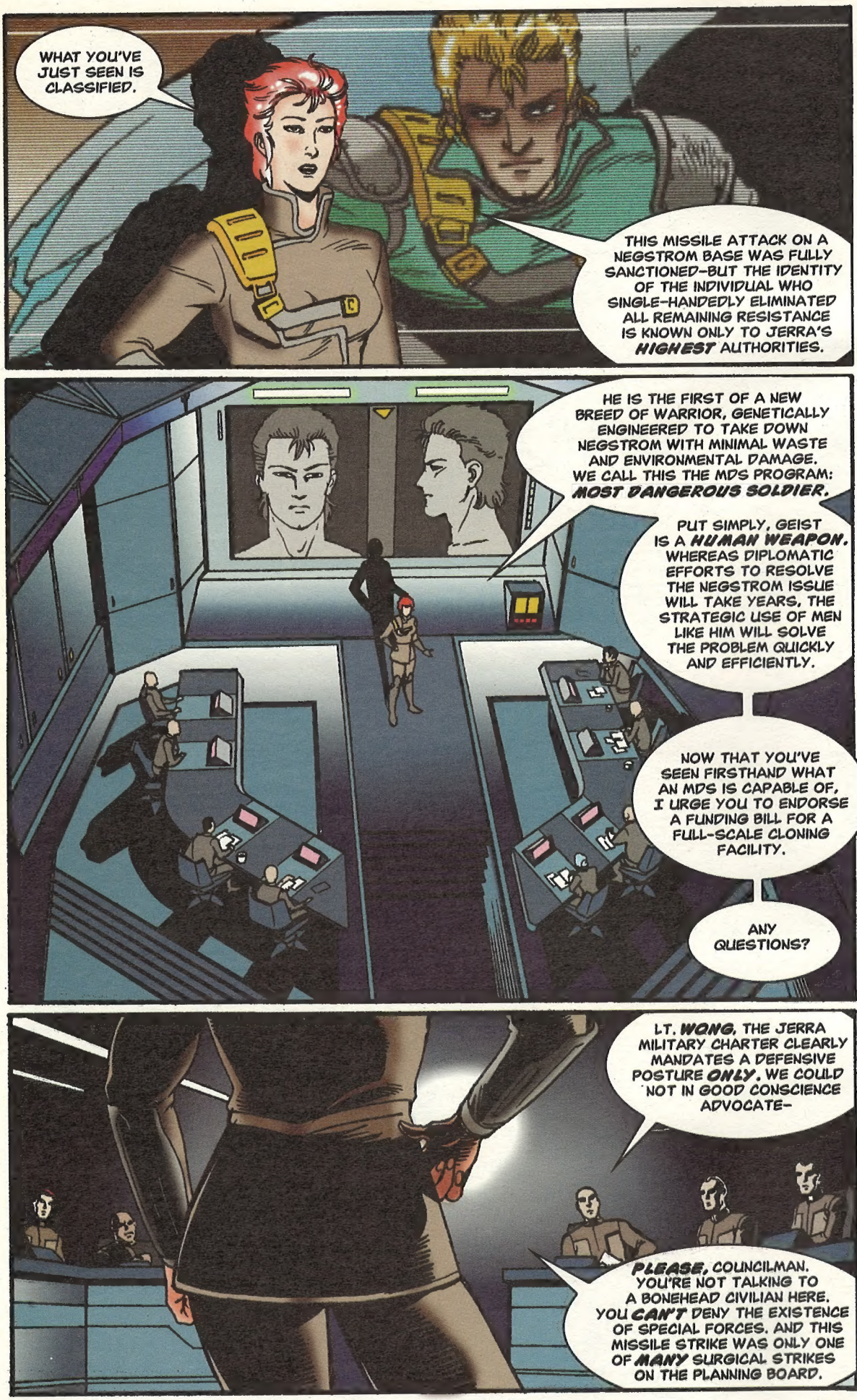
"I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED GREED TO REAR ITS UGLY HEAD. IT'S A DISEASE WE CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE."


"I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU *POLITICIANS* TO SUGAR-COAT WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING HERE..."

"MY OPINION: WHEN COLONIAL PRESIDENT NEGSTROM DECLARED PLANET JERRA AN INDEPENDENT NATION, HE DECLARED WAR ON ALL FUTURE SETTLERS."

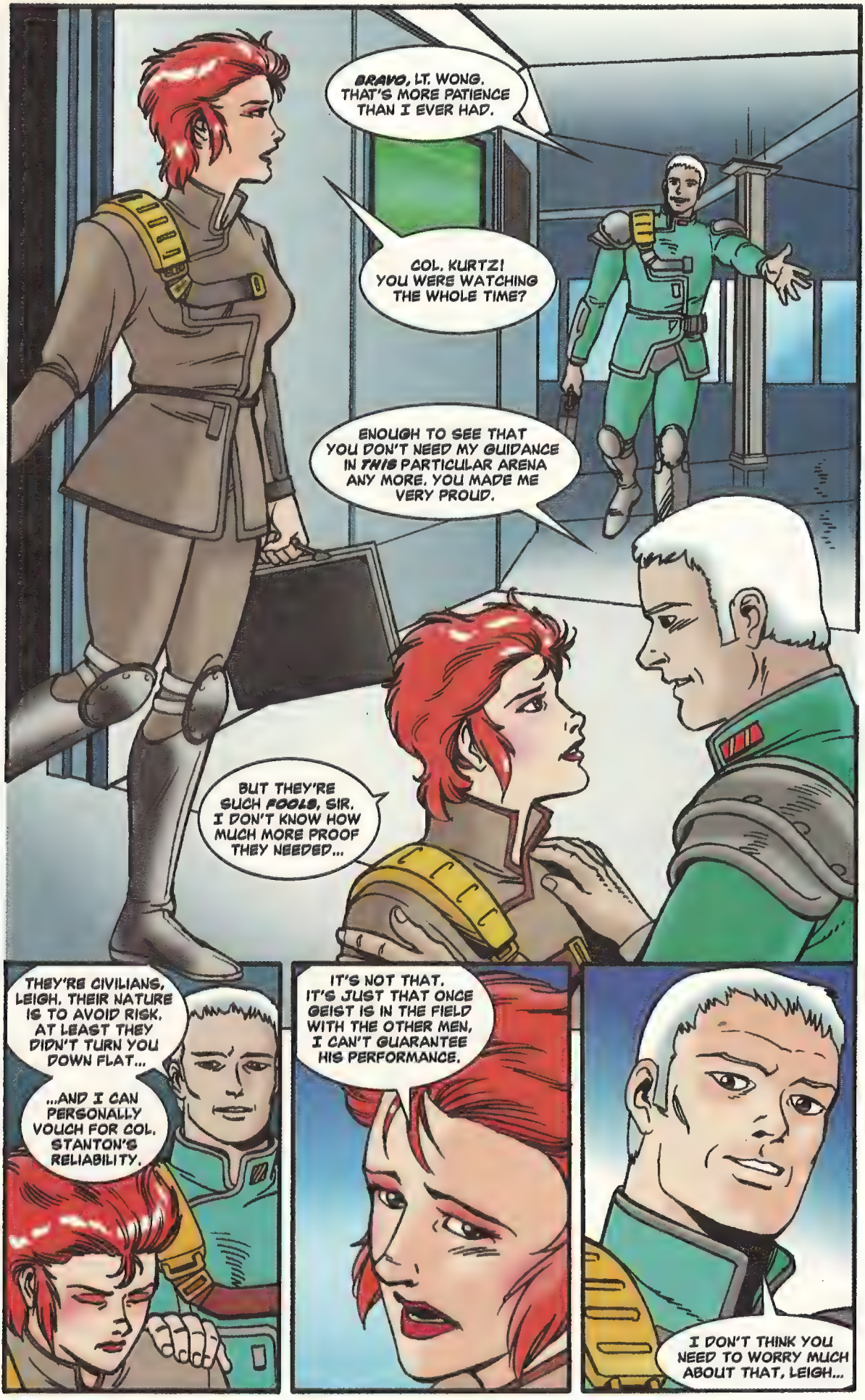
KARAAM


OSPREY I TO BASE. THE TARGET HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY SERVICED. SSM ATTACK APPEARS TO HAVE NEUTRALIZED ALL GROUND TROOPS.
WAIT A MINUTE— WHAT THE HELL...?
"SET US DOWN ON THAT AIRSTRIP. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!"
SOLDIER! STATE YOUR NAME AND M.O.S.!
GEIST.

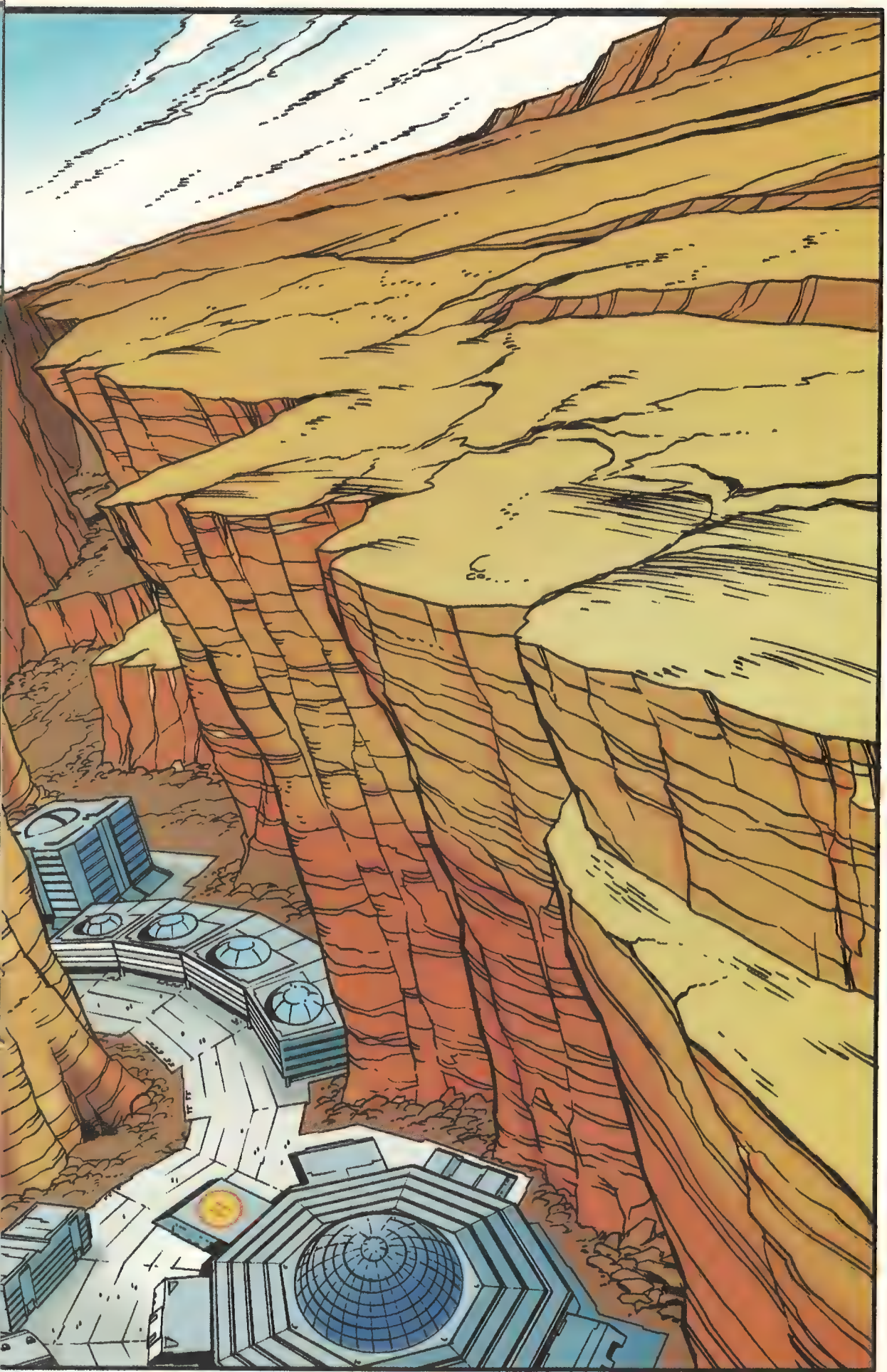

WHAT YOU'VE JUST SEEN IS CLASSIFIED.
THIS MISSILE ATTACK ON A NEGSTROM BASE WAS FULLY SANCTIONED–BUT THE IDENTITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL WHO SINGLE-HANDEDLY ELIMINATED ALL REMAINING RESISTANCE IS KNOWN ONLY TO JERRA'S HIGHEST AUTHORITIES.
HE IS THE FIRST OF A NEW BREED OF WARRIOR, GENETICALLY ENGINEERED TO TAKE DOWN NEGSTROM WITH MINIMAL WASTE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE. WE CALL THIS THE MDS PROGRAM: MOST DANGEROUS SOLDIER.
PUT SIMPLY, GEIST IS A HUMAN WEAPON. WHEREAS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE NEGSTROM ISSUE WILL TAKE YEARS, THE STRATEGIC USE OF MEN LIKE HIM WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY.
NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN FIRSTHAND WHAT AN MDS IS CAPABLE OF, I URGE YOU TO ENDORSE A FUNDING BILL FOR A FULL-SCALE CLONING FACILITY.
ANY QUESTIONS?
LT. WONG, THE JERRA MILITARY CHARTER CLEARLY MANDATES A DEFENSIVE POSTURE ONLY. WE COULD NOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE ADVOCATE–
PLEASE, COUNCILMAN. YOU'RE NOT TALKING TO A BONEHEAD CIVILIAN HERE. YOU CAN'T DENY THE EXISTENCE OF SPECIAL FORCES. AND THIS MISSILE STRIKE WAS ONLY ONE OF MANY SURGICAL STRIKES ON THE PLANNING BOARD.

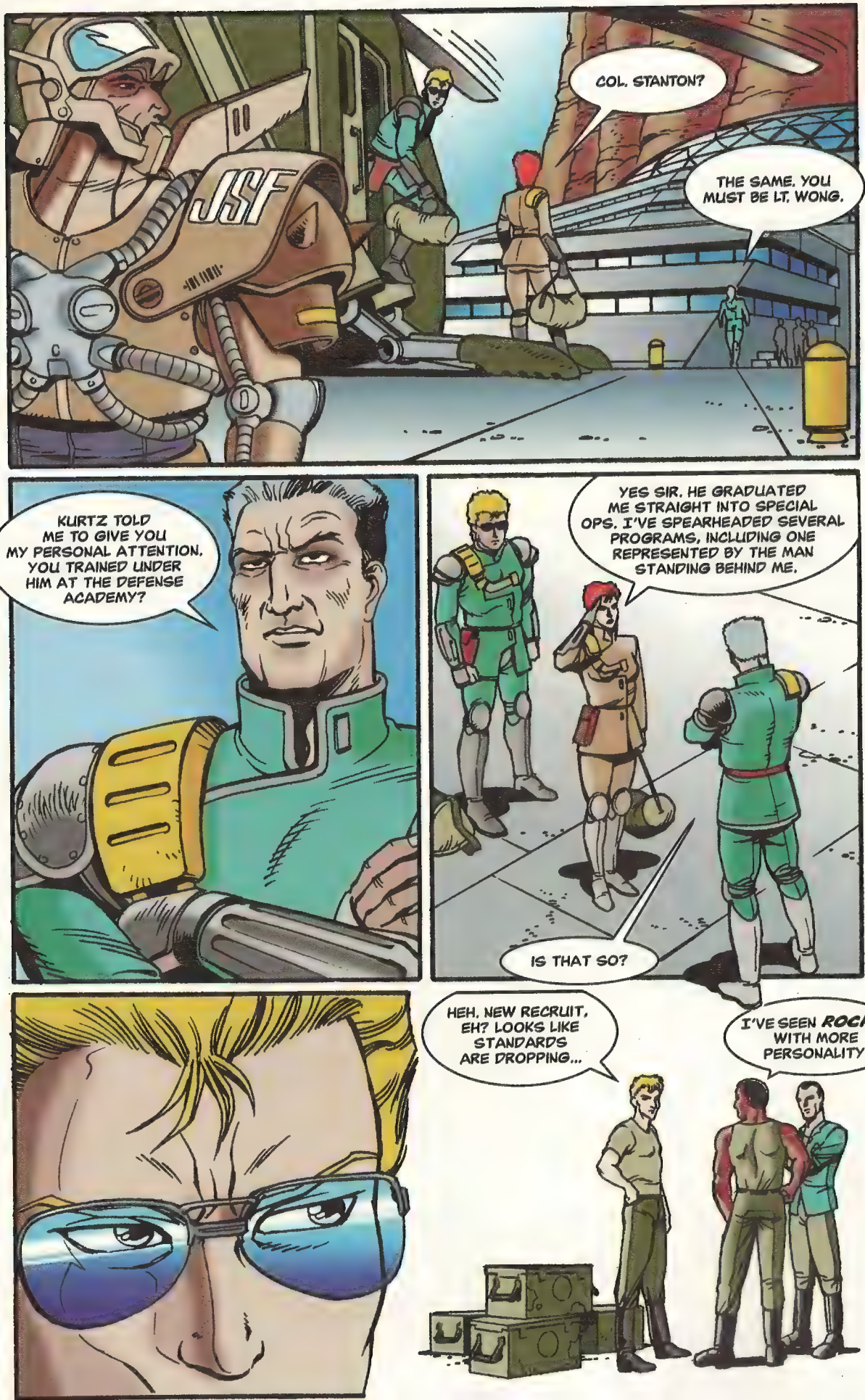
NEGSTROM'S MILITARY BUILDUP FAR OUTPACES OURS. GEIST'S OTHER COVERT MISSIONS HAVE UNCOVERED 50% MORE WEAPON STOCKPILES THAN WERE PREVIOUSLY SUSPECTED BY THIS COUNCIL...
PROGRAM A: AGGRESSION
PROGRAM B: BURNOUT
PROGRAM C: CATASTROPHE
PROGRAM D: DEATH FORCE
YOU KNOW FULL WELL THIS PLANET IS HEADED FOR CATASTROPHE. PROGRAM A HAS ALREADY PEAKED. AGGRESSION IS WIDESPREAD.
IF YOU WANT TO AVOID PROGRAM B, THE MDS IS THE ANSWER.
AND IF WE AGREE TO THIS? HOW LONG DO YOU BELIEVE IT WILL TAKE TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE?
ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OUR CLONING FACILITY GOES ON LINE.
...AND IF IT FAILS?
FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION, COUNCILMAN.
GEIST IS A MACHINE. HE EXECUTES HIS ORDERS WITH TOTAL SUCCESS. IT'S WHAT HE WAS MADE FOR.
YOU'RE ASKING US TO TAKE A BIG RISK, LIEUTENANT.
DOING NOTHING WOULD BE AN EVEN GREATER RISK.
I HAVE TO SEE HOWTHE MDS PERFORMS ON A MISSION FROM START TO FINISH BEFORE I CAN MAKE A COMMITMENT. I HAVE NO PROOF THAT THIS FILM OF YOURS IS GENUINE...
›SIGHHH‹

WHAT IF WE STATION HIM WITH SPECIAL FORCES?
...I TRUST COL. STANTON TO RENDER AN ASSESSMENT.
BUT THAT WOULD DEFEAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE MDS AS AN INDIVIDUAL OPERATIVE! IT ISN'T MEANT TO FUNCTION WITHIN A GROUP!
THAT MAY BE, LIEUTENANT. WE STILL NEED A SECOND OPINION.
YOU DO REALIZE THAT YOU'LL BE EXPOSING THE MDS TO MORE WITNESSES THAN OUR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT CAN CONTROL. YOU ALREADY FACE A SEVERE PUBLIC BACKLASH IF THE EXISTENCE OF SPECIAL FORCES IS DISCOVERED.
MDS-01 KRAUSER
QUITE POSSIBLY. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...
...IF THE MDS IS AS LETHAL AS YOU SAY...
...WE MAY JUST HAVE ANOTHER JOB FOR IT AFTER THE ENEMY IS DEFEATED.


BRAVO, LT. WONG. THAT'S MORE PATIENCE THAN I EVER HAD.
COL. KURTZ! YOU WERE WATCHING THE WHOLE TIME?
ENOUGH TO SEE THAT YOU DON'T NEED MY GUIDANCE IN THIS PARTICULAR ARENA ANY MORE. YOU MADE ME VERY PROUD.
BUT THEY'RE SUCH FOOLS, SIR. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH MORE PROOF THEY NEEDED...
THEY'RE CIVILIANS, LEIGH. THEIR NATURE IS TO AVOID RISK. AT LEAST THEY DIDN'T TURN YOU DOWN FLAT...
...AND I CAN PERSONALLY VOUCH FOR COL. STANTON'S RELIABILITY.
IT'S NOT THAT. IT'S JUST THAT ONCE GEIST IS IN THE FIELD WITH THE OTHER MEN, I CAN'T GUARANTEE HIS PERFORMANCE.
I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY MUCH ABOUT THAT, LEIGH...

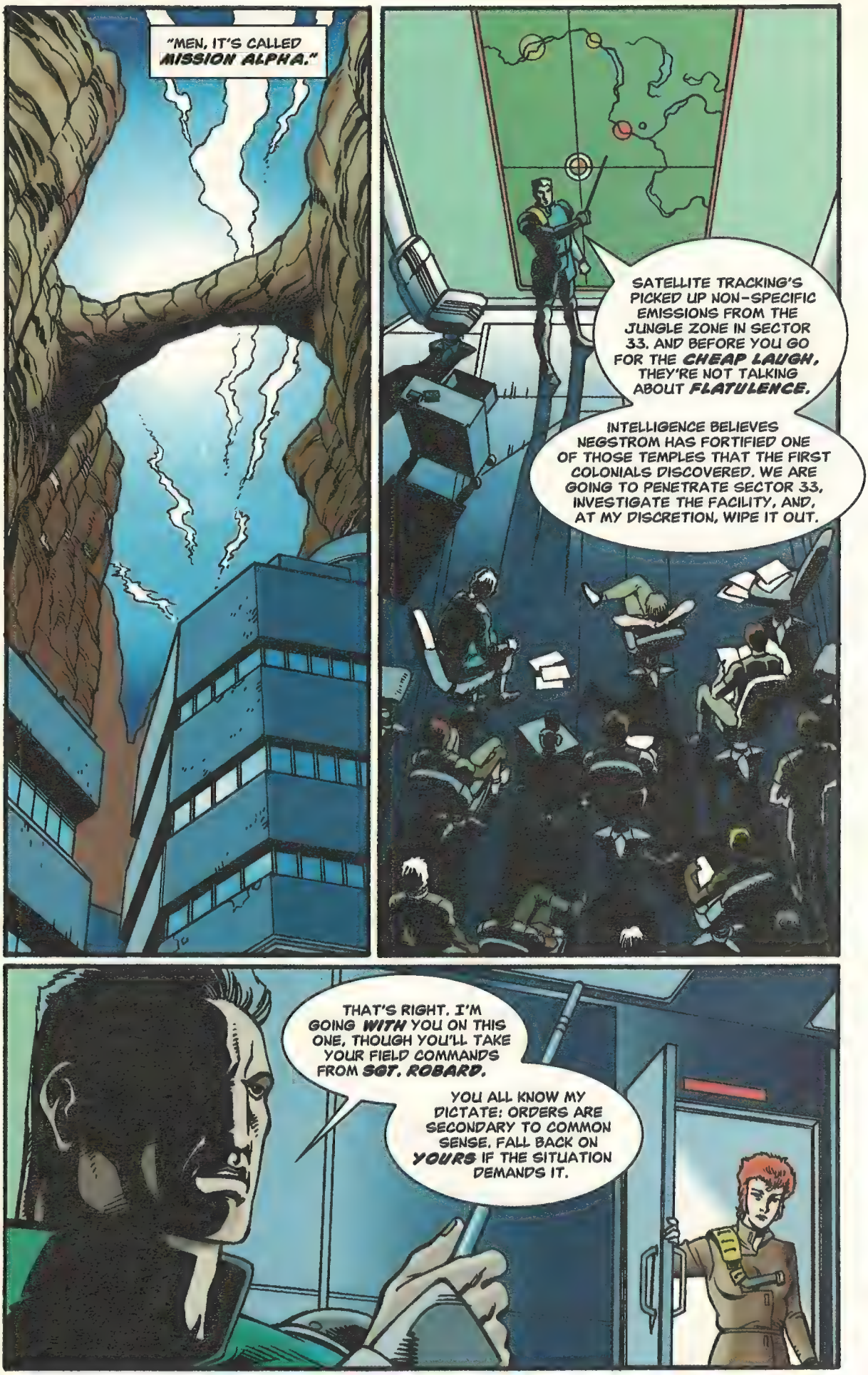
"I HAVE A FEELING HE WILL DISTINGUISH HIMSELF..."
02




JSF
COL. STANTON?
THE SAME. YOU MUST BE LT. WONG.
KURTZ TOLD ME TO GIVE YOU MY PERSONAL ATTENTION. YOU TRAINED UNDER HIM AT THE DEFENSE ACADEMY?
YES SIR. HE GRADUATED ME STRAIGHT INTO SPECIAL OPS. I'VE SPEARHEADED SEVERAL PROGRAMS, INCLUDING ONE REPRESENTED BY THE MAN STANDING BEHIND ME.
IS THAT SO?
HEH. NEW RECRUIT, EH? LOOKS LIKE STANDARDS ARE DROPPING...
I'VE SEEN ROCKS WITH MORE PERSONALITY.

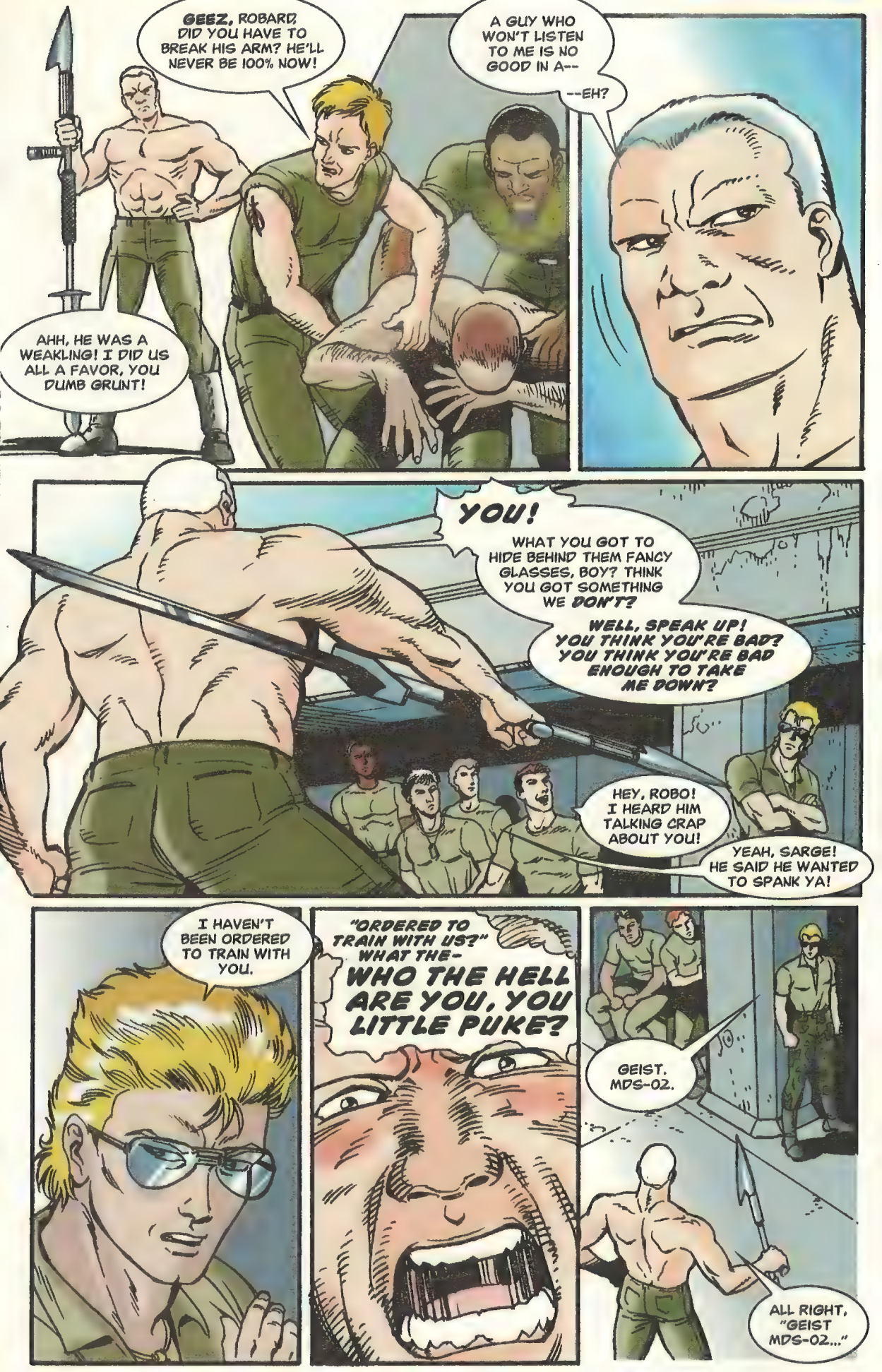
LOOKIT THE SHADES. PROB'LY USIN' 'EM TO CHECK US OUT.
THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE SOLDIER WHO'S "TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?"
YES SIR. YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO ASSESS HIS PERFORMANCE.
RRR...
GOT A NAME, SOLDIER?
GEIST. MDS-02.
WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE, GEIST?
I FOLLOW ORDERS.
THAT'S ALL?
I FOLLOW ORDERS.
I CAN'T USE THIS MAN.
HE'S GOT NO PASSION.

WHAT?
WE'RE NOT OFFICIALLY AT WAR YET, LIEUTENANT. THESE MEN ARE HERE FOR THEIR OWN REASONS.
THEY'RE NOT ROBOTS. THEY HAVE BELIEFS AND PASSIONS. IT MAKES THEM BETTER FIGHTERS.
I'LL PUT THIS MAN IN THE RESERVES, BUT I WOULDN'T TRUST HIM IN THE FIELD.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT, SIR! I HAPPEN TO KNOW THAT COL. KURTZ ORDERED YOU TO PLACE HIM-
-IN AN ACTIVE UNIT. NOTHING MORE.
THE RESERVES GO ON TRAINING MANEUVERS EVERY MORNING. THAT'S ACTIVE ENOUGH FOR A RECRUIT WITH NO INITIATIVE.
THIS IS RIDICULOUS! YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH WE'VE INVESTED IN THIS MAN! YOU'LL BE WASTING TIME, MONEY AND LIVES IF HE'S JUST SITTING HERE ON HIS ASS!
KURTZ WILL HEAR ABOUT THIS!
>HFF< WELL, WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY...?
I'VE BEEN GIVEN MY ORDERS.
...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'VE GOT RIDING ON YOU? DON'T YOU WANT TO FIGHT IN A REAL MISSION?
MY ORDERS ARE CLEAR. I'VE BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE RESERVES.
HEH. NOT EVEN AN ARGUMENT.
BARELY A HUMAN BEING, MUCH LESS A SOLDIER.


"MEN, IT'S CALLED MISSION ALPHA."
SATELLITE TRACKING'S PICKED UP NON-SPECIFIC EMISSIONS FROM THE JUNGLE ZONE IN SECTOR 33. AND BEFORE YOU GO FOR THE CHEAP LAUGH, THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT FLATULENCE.
INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES NEGSTROM HAS FORTIFIED ONE OF THOSE TEMPLES THAT THE FIRST COLONIALS DISCOVERED. WE ARE GOING TO PENETRATE SECTOR 33, INVESTIGATE THE FACILITY, AND, AT MY DISCRETION, WIPE IT OUT.
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M GOING WITH YOU ON THIS ONE, THOUGH YOU'LL TAKE YOUR FIELD COMMANDS FROM SGT. ROBARD.
YOU ALL KNOW MY DICTATE: ORDERS ARE SECONDARY TO COMMON SENSE. FALL BACK ON YOURS IF THE SITUATION DEMANDS IT.

NOW THEN, SINCE THIS IS A DEEP JUNGLE MISSION, WE'LL BE USING THE AIR TURTLE AND DROPPING IN THE CEOLOCANTH. WHEN THE JUNGLE GETS TOO THICK, WE GO THE REST OF THE WAY ON FOOT.
YOU'LL BE WEARING FIGHTEX ARMOR AND CARRYING A HAND WEAPON OF YOUR CHOICE. REMEMBER, IF THIS IS A MILITARY INSTALLATION, THEY'LL HAVE POWERED SUITS PATROLLING THE ENTIRE SECTOR.
COLONEL, HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE DO YOUR MEN HAVE AGAINST POWERED SUITS?
ENOUGH, LIEUTENANT.
...AND WHAT ABOUT THE NEW CYBORG MODELS?
"CYBORG?"
WHAT'S SHE TALKIN' ABOUT, COLONEL?
NOTHIN' YOU CAN'T HANDLE, BOYS.
MEETING'S ADJOURNED.
COME ON, LAWTON! YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT!

NO!
YOU'RE LEAVING YOURSELF WIDE OPEN! THAT'S NOT HOW I TRAINED YOU!
GET 'IM, ROBO!
WIN ME OUTTA K.P., ROBO!
RO-BO! RO-BO!
YOU STINK, LAWTON! GONNA HAVE TO FLUNK YOU!
KRAK
YEEARRRGH!
YOU DIDN'T LISTEN TO ME! WHY DIDN'T YOU LISTEN?
GUKHHHN


GEEZ, ROBARD, DID YOU HAVE TO BREAK HIS ARM? HE'LL NEVER BE 100% NOW!
A GUY WHO WON'T LISTEN TO ME IS NO GOOD IN A--
--EH?
AHH, HE WAS A WEAKLING! I DID US ALL A FAVOR, YOU DUMB GRUNT!
YOU!
WHAT YOU GOT TO HIDE BEHIND THEM FANCY GLASSES, BOY? THINK YOU GOT SOMETHING WE DON'T?
WELL, SPEAK UP! YOU THINK YOU'RE BAD? YOU THINK YOU'RE BAD ENOUGH TO TAKE ME DOWN?
HEY, ROBO! I HEARD HIM TALKING CRAP ABOUT YOU!
YEAH, SARGE! HE SAID HE WANTED TO SPANK YA!
I HAVEN'T BEEN ORDERED TO TRAIN WITH YOU.
"ORDERED TO TRAIN WITH US?" WHAT THE-
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, YOU LITTLE PUKE?
GEIST. MDS-02.
ALL RIGHT, "GEIST MDS-02..."

I ORDER YOU TO GET YOUR SISSY LITTLE PUKE ASS OVER HERE AND FIGHT ME!
IS THAT ALL?
NO! I ALSO ORDER YOU TO RIP OFF BOTH MY ARMS AND MAKE ME SPIT BLOOD! THINK YOU CAN DO THAT, PUKE-BOY?
LET'S FIND OUT.
DO 'IM, ROBO!
SNAP HIM IN TWO!

WHAT THE HELL'S WITH YOU, WONG? THESE MEN AREN'T CLEARED TO KNOW ABOUT THOSE NEGSTROM CYBORG-SUITS!
DON'T YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE? THEY'RE GOING TO BE UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL ONCE THEY ENTER THAT SECTOR. THOSE CYBORGS HAVE A MUCH QUICKER REACTION TIME THAN ANY CONVENTIONAL POWERED SUIT! IT'LL BE A SLAUGHTER!
I TRUST MY MEN TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS IN THE FIELD! IT MAKES THEM MORE ADAPTABLE IN UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES!
MAYBE, BUT THEY JUST WALKED OUT OF HERE THINKING YOU'RE HOLDING SOMETHING OUT ON THEM. THEY MAY NOT TRUST YOU IN RETURN NOW...
...WHICH IS ENTIRELY YOUR FAULT, LT. WONG! YOU BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT! YOU'RE COMPROMISING MORALE!
AM I, COLONEL? WELL, LET ME OFFER A SOLUTION...
OH, DON'T TELL ME! IT'S YOUR NEW RECRUIT, RIGHT? ARE YOU GOING TO START IN ON THAT AGAIN?
GEIST IS A SPECIALIST! HE'S THE FIRST AND ONLY SOLDIER TO HAVE FOUGHT A CYBORG-SUIT! THE DATA WE HAVE ARE ALL DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO HIM!
YOU'D BE INSANE NOT TO TAKE HIM ON THIS MISSION!

SIT TIGHT AND KEEP CHANGING HIS DIAPERS, LIEUTENANT. WE'RE BRINGING BACK MORE THAN JUST DATA ON THOSE THINGS FROM THIS MISSION.
COL. STANTON! COLONEL!
YES, SOLDIER, WHAT IS IT?
I-IT'S THE NEW GUY, SIR! THE ONE WITH THE SHADES!
GEIST? WHAT ABOUT HIM?
SGT. ROBARD... HE...
..M-MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST COME AND SEE, SIR!
OVER THERE, COLONEL! YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT!
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO REFEREE EVERY LITTLE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN MY NCO STAFF AND THE MEN! THIS HAD BETTER BE–
HOLY MOTHER OF GOD!

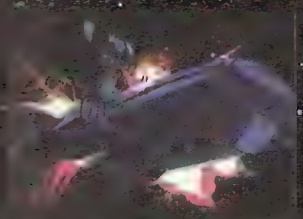
Y-YOU PSYCHOTIC MANIAC!
YOU JUST MAIMED ONE OF MY BEST MEN!
HE ORDERED ME TO.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU, COLONEL. GEIST IS A MACHINE–A KILLING MACHINE. SIMPLY INPUT THE APPROPRIATE COMMAND AND ANYONE NEAR HIM DIES.
IT MAY AS WELL BE THE ENEMY.

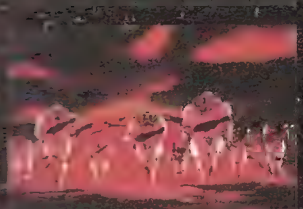
ARMORED TROOPER

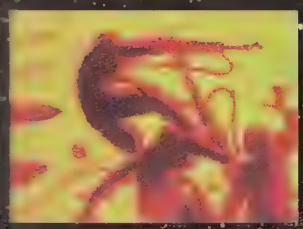
VOTOMS

SPECIAL PREVIEW COMIC

In 1983, the television debut of this science fiction series brought a new standard of storytelling excellence to the anime medium. In the years since, the potential of VOTOMS virtually exploded as books, games, and made-for-video animation took the series to new heights. In 1996, VOTOMS will at last come to America, on video from U.S. Manga Corps and in print from CPM Comics. We are proud to present, in this and the next two issues of M.D. GEIST: GROUND ZERO, the first ever English-language adaptation of ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS Episode 1: *WAR'S END*.







Gilgamesh and Balarant.
These two star systems have been engaged in a Hundred Year War for reasons which were never clearly established.
In the beginning, the battles were localized, but by the time I volunteered, the war had encompassed over 200 worlds.

And I fought...

At first, I fought because I believed it was for my homeland, for Melkia.
But the fighting just continued to drag on and on, with no end in sight.

And I became exhausted.
We had all become exhausted...

-Chirico Cuvie, A.T. Pilot
Gilgamesh Army,
24th Melkian Division

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MechaDesign: KUNIO OKAWARA
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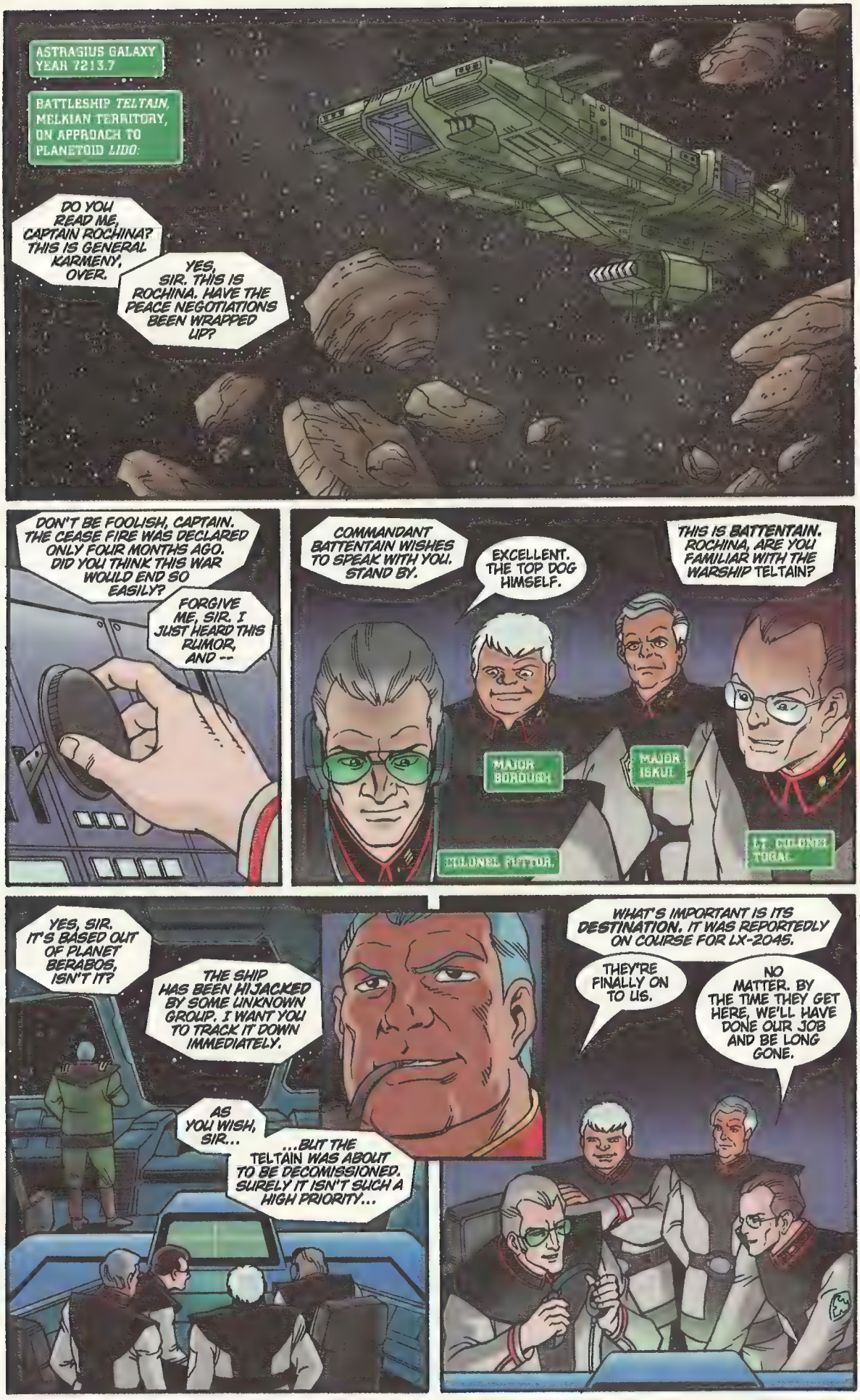
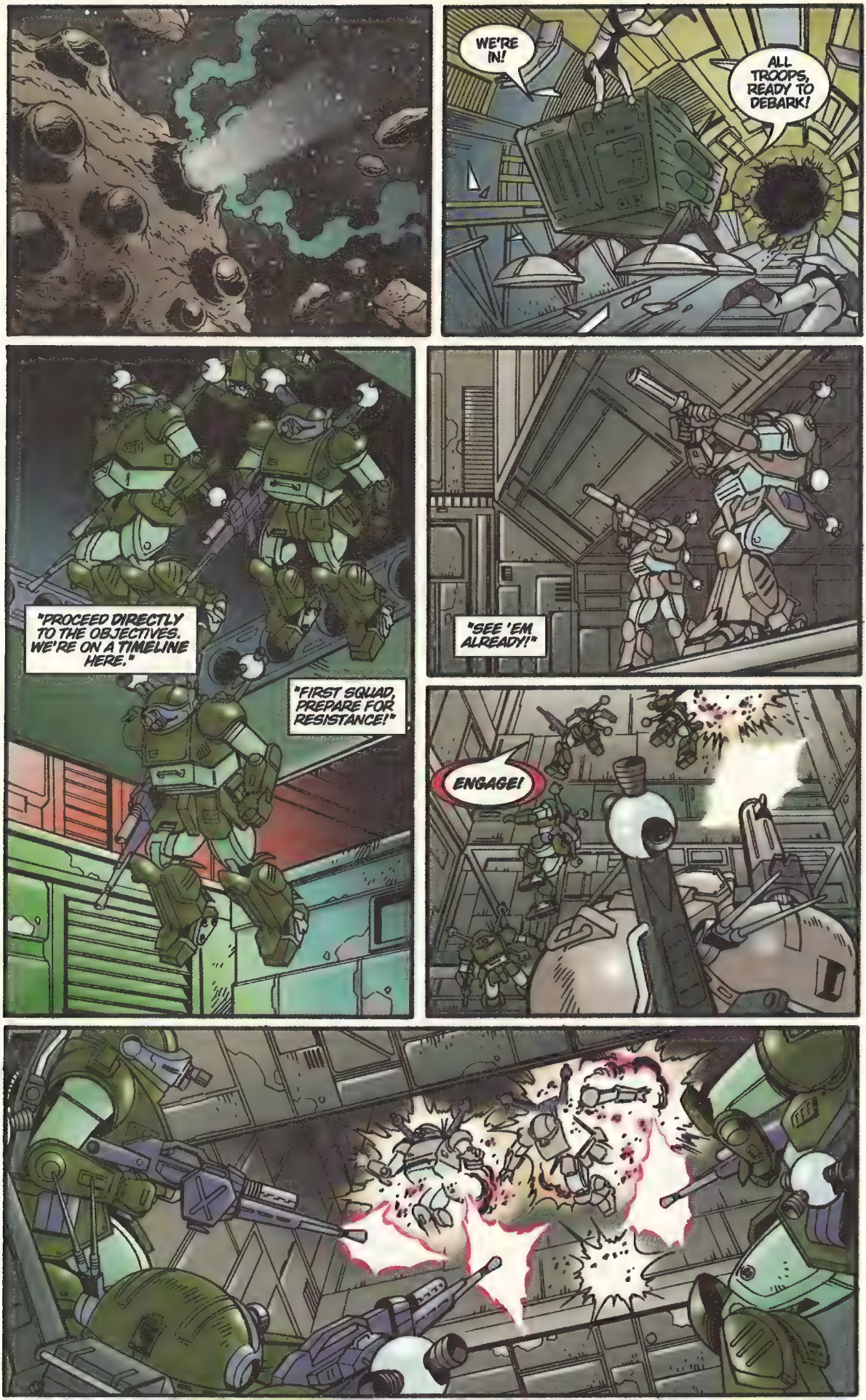
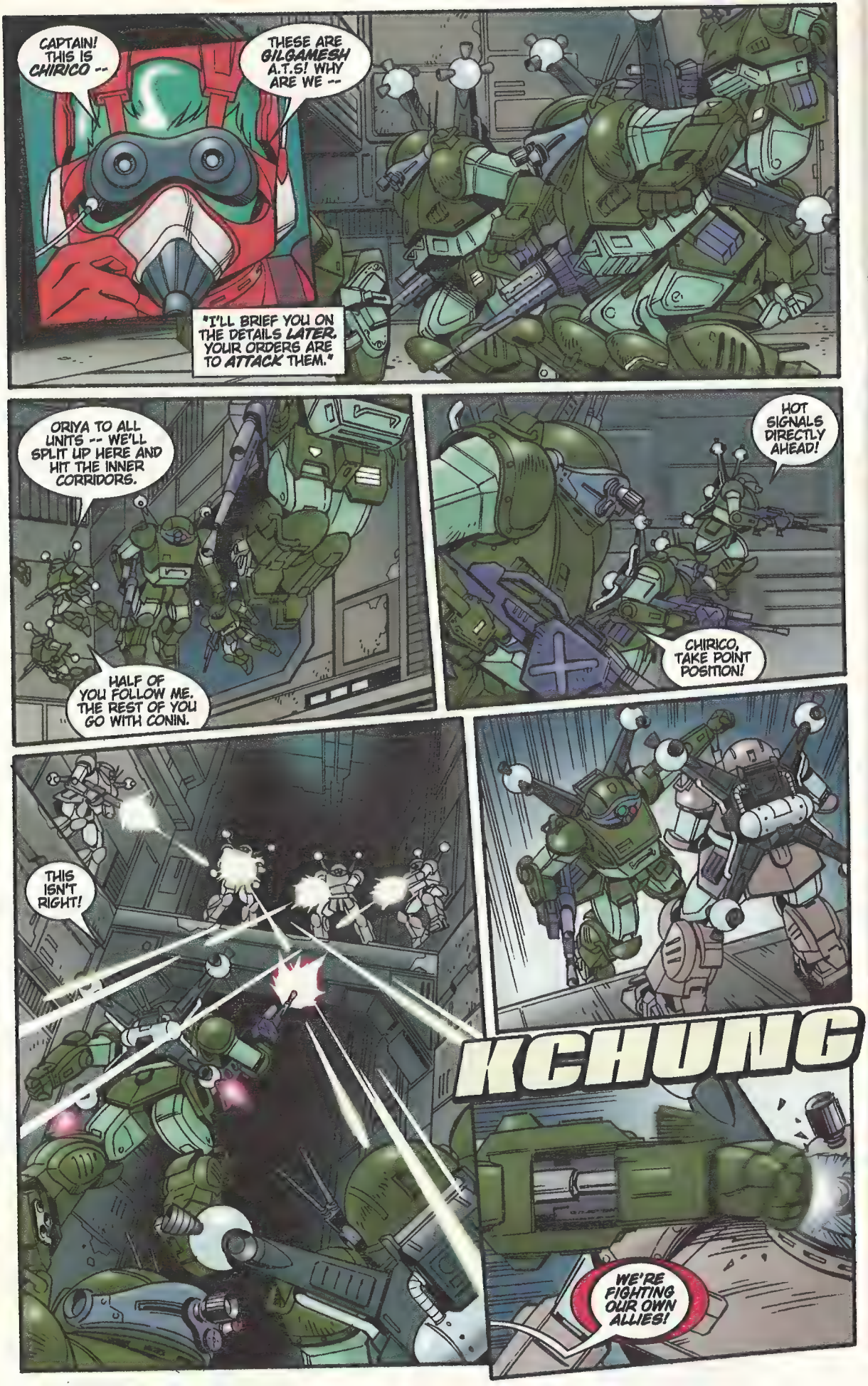
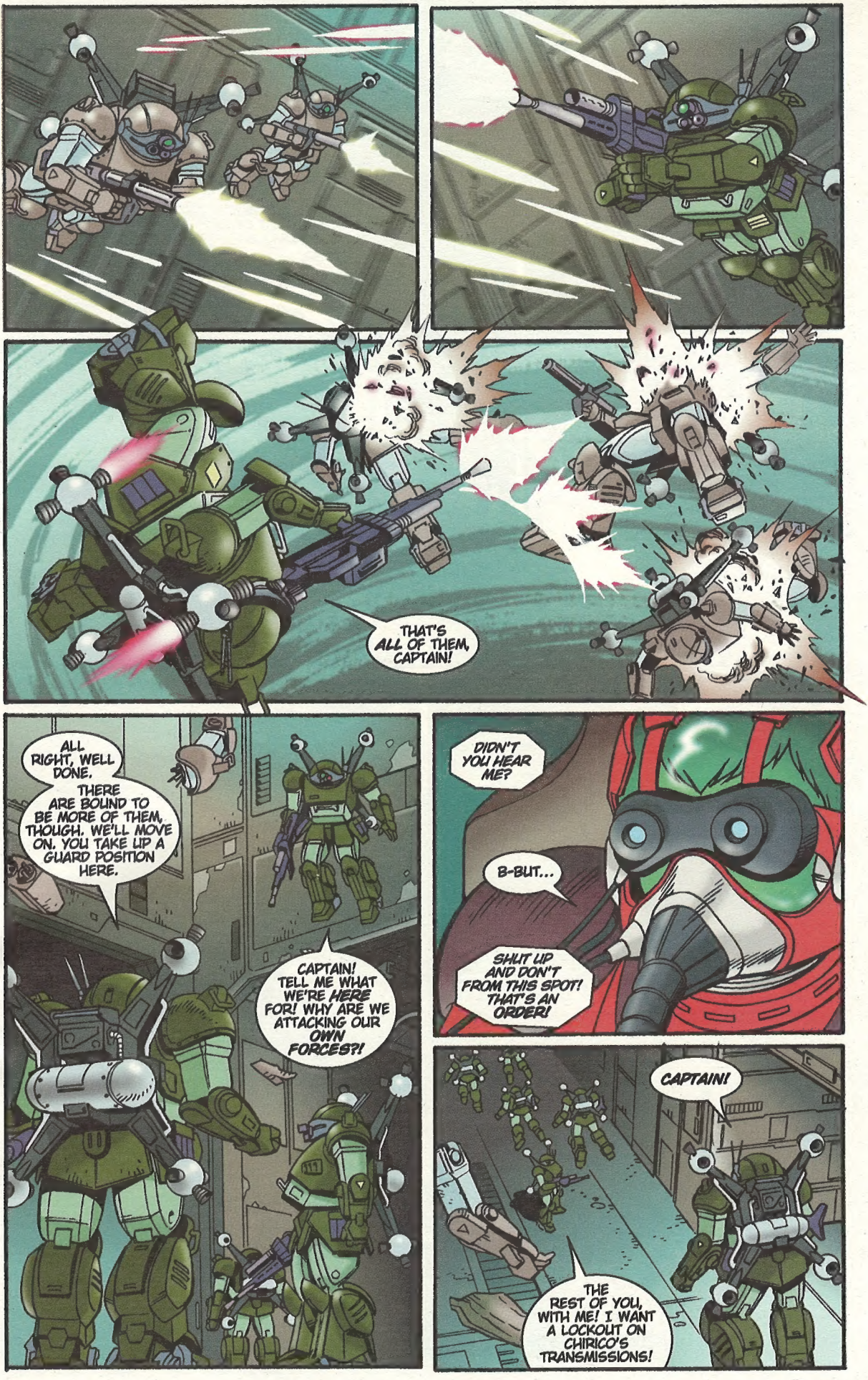

ASTRAGIUS GALAXY
YEAR 7213.7
BATTLESHIP TELTAIN, MELKIAN TERRITORY, ON APPROACH TO PLANETOID LIDO:
DO YOU READ ME, CAPTAIN ROCHINA? THIS IS GENERAL KARMENY, OVER.
YES, SIR. THIS IS ROCHINA. HAVE THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BEEN WRAPPED UP?
DON'T BE FOOLISH, CAPTAIN. THE CEASE FIRE WAS DECLARED ONLY FOUR MONTHS AGO. DID YOU THINK THIS WAR WOULD END SO EASILY?
FORGIVE ME, SIR. I JUST HEARD THIS RUMOR, AND --
COMMANDANT BATTENTAIN WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU. STAND BY.
EXCELLENT. THE TOP DOG HIMSELF.
THIS IS BATTENTAIN. ROCHINA, ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE WARSHIP TELTAIN?
MAJOR BOROUGH
MAJOR ISKUL
COLONEL RIFFOR
LT. COLONEL TOGAL
YES, SIR. IT'S BASED OUT OF PLANET BERABOS, ISN'T IT?
THE SHIP HAS BEEN HIJACKED BY SOME UNKNOWN GROUP. I WANT YOU TO TRACK IT DOWN IMMEDIATELY.
AS YOU WISH, SIR...
...BUT THE TELTAIN WAS ABOUT TO BE DECOMISSIONED. SURELY IT ISN'T SUCH A HIGH PRIORITY...
WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS ITS DESTINATION. IT WAS REPORTEDLY ON COURSE FOR LX-2045.
THEY'RE FINALLY ON TO US.
NO MATTER. BY THE TIME THEY GET HERE, WE'LL HAVE DONE OUR JOB AND BE LONG GONE.

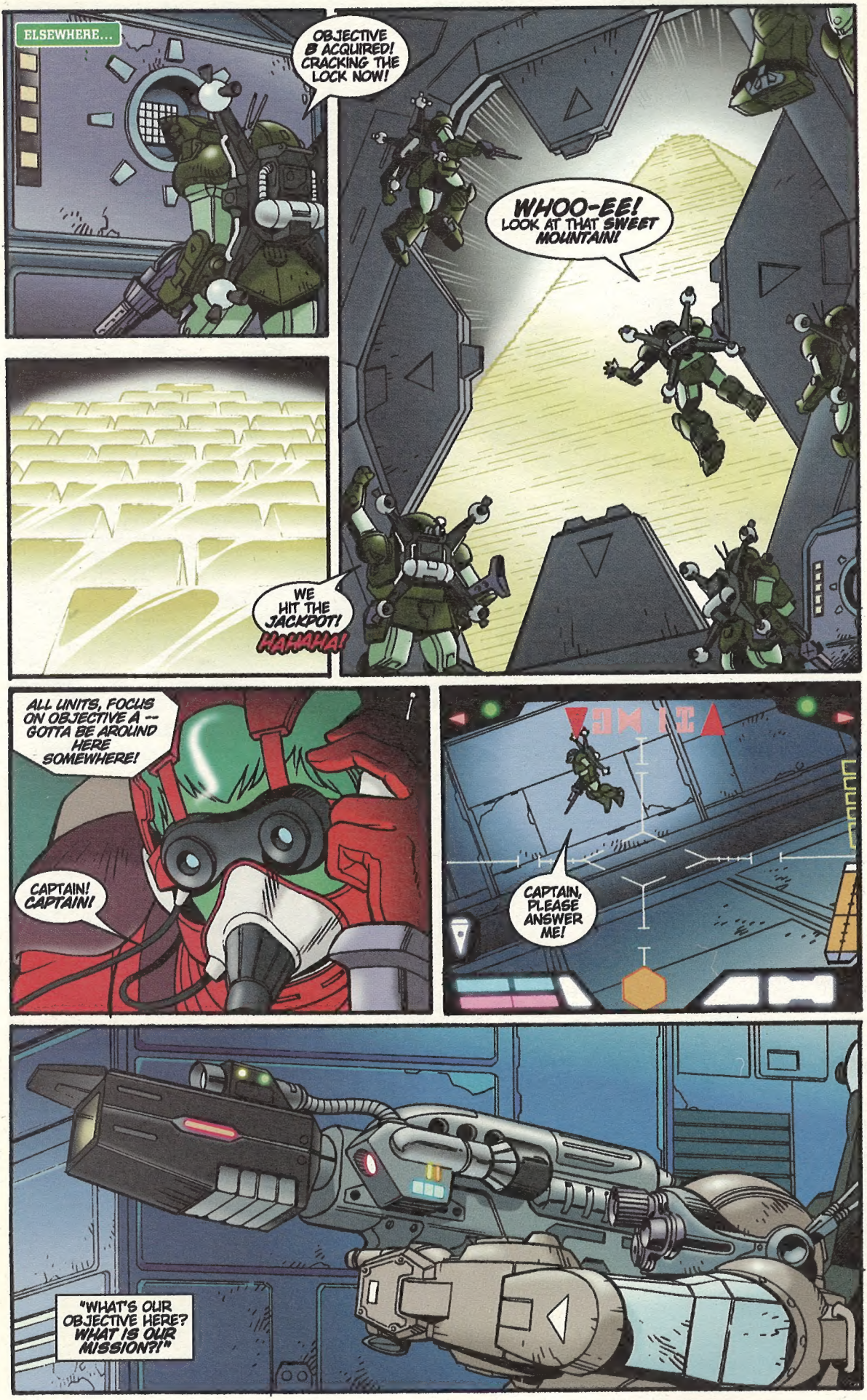
ENOUGH CHATTER.
ALERT YOUR MEN. WE'VE ARRIVED.
"CAPTAIN ORIYA, CAPTAIN CONIN -- FINAL STATUS CHECK?"
ALL SYSTEMS GO, GENERAL KILLY...
...NOW COMMENCING FINAL TROOP REVIEW.
DOES YOUR ASSAULT TEAM KNOW THE DETAILS OF THE MISSION?
NOT THE CLASSIFIED DETAILS, SIR.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE NEW MAN?
"DO YOU MEAN CHIRICO, SIR?"
"YES. HE WAS JUST TRANSFERED IN FROM SPECIAL FORCES. I DON'T TRUST HIM."
WE DIDN'T WANT TO AROUSE SUSPICION, SO WE'RE SENDING HIM IN WITH YOU.
HE HASN'T BEEN BRIEFED ABOUT THIS MISSION.
MAKE SURE HE SUSPECTS NOTHING.
DON'T WORRY, SIR. IF HE STARTS TO ASK QUESTIONS...
...WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM.
EXCELLENT, YOU MAY BEGIN YOUR ASSAULT.

THERE'S LIDO!
WE'RE STILL UNDETECTED.
"ARMING MISSILES."
FIRE!
KA-BOOM
BREACH!
AGHHH!

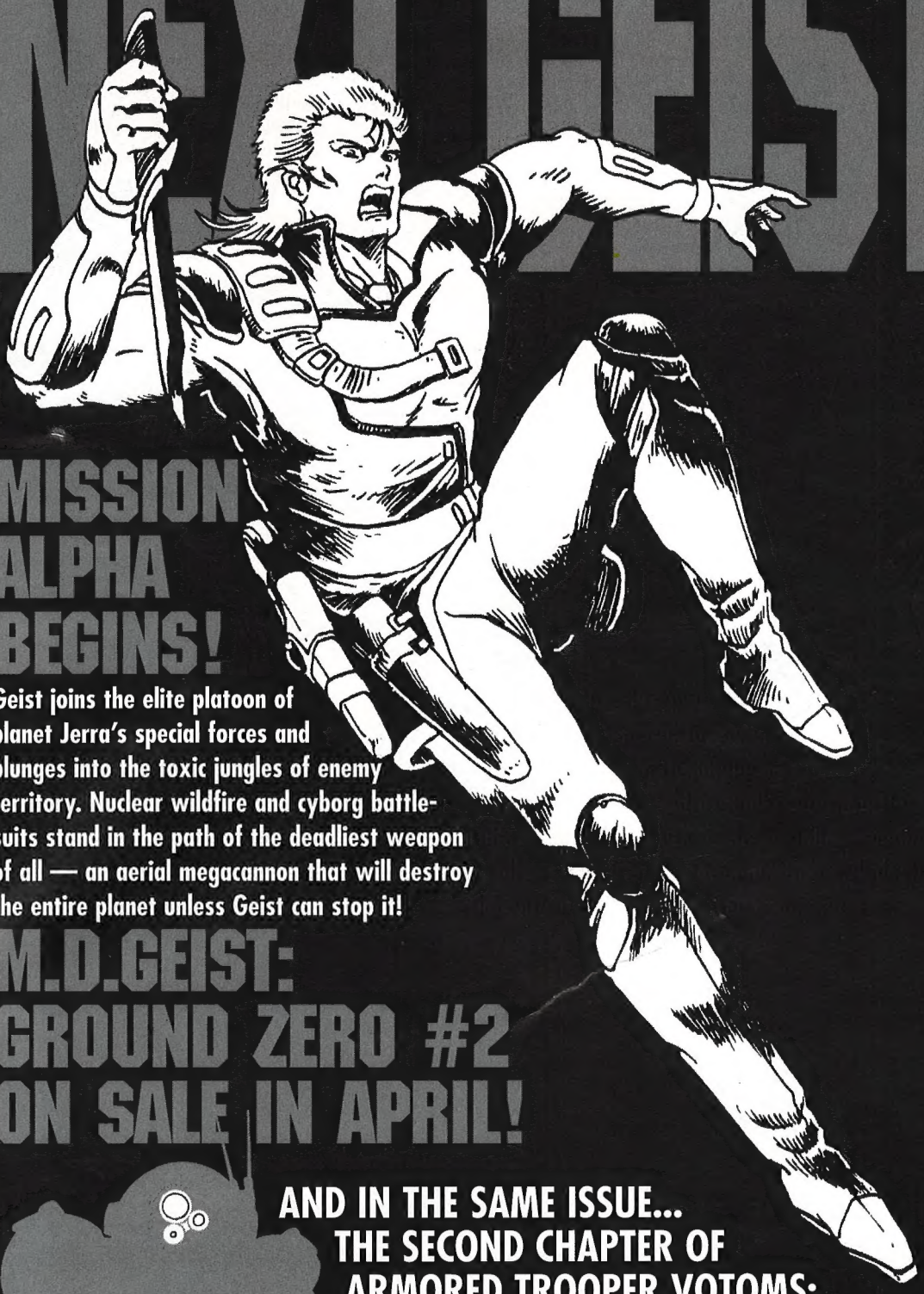

WE'RE IN!
ALL TROOPS, READY TO DEBARK!
"PROCEED DIRECTLY TO THE OBJECTIVES. WE'RE ON A TIMELINE HERE."
"FIRST SQUAD, PREPARE FOR RESISTANCE!"
"SEE 'EM ALREADY!"
ENGAGE!


CAPTAIN! THIS IS CHIRICO --
THESE ARE GILGAMESH A.T.S! WHY ARE WE --
"I'LL BRIEF YOU ON THE DETAILS LATER. YOUR ORDERS ARE TO ATTACK THEM."
ORIYA TO ALL UNITS -- WE'LL SPLIT UP HERE AND HIT THE INNER CORRIDORS.
HALF OF YOU FOLLOW ME. THE REST OF YOU GO WITH CONIN.
HOT SIGNALS DIRECTLY AHEAD!
CHIRICO, TAKE POINT POSITION!
THIS ISN'T RIGHT!
KCHUNG
WE'RE FIGHTING OUR OWN ALLIES!


THAT'S ALL OF THEM, CAPTAIN!
ALL RIGHT, WELL DONE. THERE ARE BOUND TO BE MORE OF THEM, THOUGH. WE'LL MOVE ON. YOU TAKE UP A GUARD POSITION HERE.
CAPTAIN! TELL ME WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR! WHY ARE WE ATTACKING OUR OWN FORCES?!
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?
B-BUT...
SHUT UP AND DON'T FROM THIS SPOT! THAT'S AN ORDER!
CAPTAIN!
THE REST OF YOU, WITH ME! I WANT A LOCKOUT ON CHIRICO'S TRANSMISSIONS!


ELSEWHERE...
OBJECTIVE B ACQUIRED! CRACKING THE LOCK NOW!
WHOO-EE! LOOK AT THAT SWEET MOUNTAIN!
WE HIT THE JACKPOT! HAHAHA!
ALL UNITS, FOCUS ON OBJECTIVE A -- GOTTA BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE!
CAPTAIN! CAPTAIN!
CAPTAIN, PLEASE ANSWER ME!
"WHAT'S OUR OBJECTIVE HERE? WHAT IS OUR MISSION?!"

NEXT GEIST



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